



# ARIZONA EDUCATOR PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS™



## STUDY GUIDE

06 Political Science/American Government

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## **PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AEPA™ AND TEST PREPARATION**

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Part 1 of this study guide is contained in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print this section:

[General Information About the AEPA and Test Preparation](#)



## PART 2: FIELD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Field 06: Political Science/American Government

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#### INTRODUCTION

This section includes a list of the test objectives, practice questions, and an answer key for the selected-response questions.

**Test objectives.** As noted earlier, the test objectives are broad, conceptual statements that reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding an entry-level educator needs to practice effectively in Arizona schools. The list of test objectives for each test field is the *only* source of information about what a specific test will cover and therefore should be studied carefully.

**Practice questions.** The practice selected-response questions and practice performance assignments included in this section are designed to give you an introduction to the nature of the questions included in the AEPA tests. The practice questions represent the various types of questions you may expect to see on an actual test; however, they are *not* designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of individual strengths and weaknesses or to predict your performance on the test as a whole.

When you answer the practice questions, you may wish to use the sample answer sheet and sample Written Response Booklet provided in Part 1 to acquaint yourself with these materials. Use the answer key located after the practice questions to check your answers. Sample responses are provided immediately following each written performance assignment. The sample responses in this guide are for illustrative purposes only. Your written response should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

To help you identify how the test objectives are measured, the objective statement to which the question corresponds is listed in the answer key. When you are finished with the practice questions, you may wish to go back and review the entire list of test objectives and descriptive statements for your test field.

# TEST OBJECTIVES

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## Field 06: Political Science/American Government

### SUBAREAS:

1. Concepts and Skills
2. Political Thought, Comparative Government, and International Relations
3. United States and Arizona Government

### CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

#### **0001 Understand political science terms, concepts, and theories.**

For example: using basic concepts of political science (e.g., power, justice, natural rights) to analyze general political phenomena and specific political issues; examining the origins and purposes of government (e.g., to organize society, to control territory, to manage conflict); and comparing major theories in political science (e.g., classical republicanism, totalitarianism).

#### **0002 Understand methods for locating, gathering, and organizing social science information.**

For example: understanding the characteristics and uses of social science materials (e.g., encyclopedias, research studies, bibliographies); applying research procedures in the social sciences (e.g., formulating questions and hypotheses); organizing information into logical and coherent outlines; and applying procedures for retrieving information from traditional sources and new technologies (e.g., CD-ROM, video discs, the Internet).

#### **0003 Apply methods for evaluating and interpreting social science information.**

For example: analyzing factors affecting the reliability of source materials; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; analyzing the purpose or message of a political poster or editorial cartoon; and interpreting information presented in print, visual, and multimedia material (e.g., models, charts, tables, and other graphic representations).

#### **0004 Understand how to frame questions, analyze and synthesize information, make generalizations, and reach and communicate valid conclusions.**

For example: assessing alternative formulations of a research problem; evaluating social science materials (e.g., identifying central questions in public policy debates, distinguishing between differing interpretations); analyzing issues in the social sciences from multiple perspectives; determining whether conclusions or generalizations are supported by multiple sources of evidence; and evaluating the appropriateness of written and graphic formats for conveying a specific body of information.

**POLITICAL THOUGHT, COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**0005 Understand the history of political thought through the modern era.**

For example: analyzing the influence of ancient Greek and Roman political philosophies on the development of modern government; understanding the development of the English constitution and parliamentary system through the seventeenth century; identifying the contributions of major political philosophers (e.g., Sun Tzu, Plato, Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi); and analyzing the relationships between various historical developments and the evolution of political thought (e.g., the Enlightenment and democratic liberalism, the Industrial Revolution and socialism).

**0006 Understand various governmental systems.**

For example: comparing historical and contemporary forms of government; analyzing the roles of political parties and the influence of historical and cultural traditions on various governmental systems; recognizing the characteristics of a totalitarian state; comparing the functions of legislatures in modern governmental systems; understanding the disparities between the theory and the practice of various political ideologies; and comparing various forms of democratic government.

**0007 Understand the nature of diplomacy and the role of international organizations.**

For example: understanding the history, basic principles, and functions of diplomacy; examining major events in twentieth-century diplomacy; and analyzing the structure, functions, and goals of the United Nations and other international agencies (e.g., NATO, European Union, World Court).

**0008 Understand U.S. foreign policy.**

For example: demonstrating familiarity with the foreign policy decision-making process; understanding the changing role of the United States in world affairs before, during, and after the Cold War; analyzing domestic and international political and ideological influences on foreign policy decisions; and understanding major U.S. foreign policy initiatives in various parts of the world.

**UNITED STATES AND ARIZONA GOVERNMENT**

**0009 Understand the historical development of government in the United States.**

For example: demonstrating familiarity with the structure and function of colonial governments; understanding influences in the development of colonial governments (e.g., Iroquois Confederation, Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, Massachusetts Body of Liberties); examining political relations between the colonies and England and the colonies and other political entities (e.g., Native American nations, France, Spain); analyzing debates surrounding the abandonment of the Articles of Confederation and the adoption of the U.S. Constitution; and examining major events and trends in U.S. political history since 1789.

**0010 Understand the United States Constitution.**

For example: demonstrating familiarity with major constitutional principles (e.g., federalism, checks and balances); evaluating basic elements of the Bill of Rights; examining constitutional limits on political power; and analyzing ways in which the Constitution has been adapted and amended to meet the nation's changing needs and goals.

**0011 Understand the structure, organization, and operation of the federal government.**

For example: analyzing the structure, functions, and powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government; demonstrating familiarity with major steps in the legislative process; analyzing interactions among lobbyists, bureaucrats, and congressional staff in the modern legislative process (i.e., the iron triangle); analyzing the roles and duties of the president and executive branch; and analyzing the role and function of the federal courts (e.g., judicial review).

**0012 Understand the relationship of government to the United States economic system.**

For example: understanding basic elements of federal fiscal and monetary policy; recognizing the functions of federal regulatory agencies; analyzing factors that have influenced the enactment of social legislation and development of the welfare state; assessing the significance of the national debt; and demonstrating familiarity with the federal budget-making process.

**0013 Understand the development of political parties in the United States.**

For example: analyzing the functions of parties in the U.S. political process; examining significant developments in the evolution of political parties in the United States (e.g., the declining role of parties relative to interest groups and media); understanding the structure and operation of political parties; analyzing the role of third parties in U.S. political history; and comparing the U.S. party system with the party systems of other nations (e.g., one-party systems, multi-party systems).

**0014 Understand the election process in the United States.**

For example: demonstrating familiarity with basic components of the U.S. electoral process (e.g., primary elections, general elections, the electoral college); understanding the evolution of the candidate nomination process; recognizing major steps and processes in political elections; analyzing factors influencing the outcome of elections at the local, state, and national levels; and examining factors that encourage and discourage voting.

**0015 Understand the role of political culture, public opinion, and the media in United States politics.**

For example: recognizing ways in which citizens participate in and influence the political process in the United States; examining the social, cultural, and economic determinants of political beliefs; identifying various ideologies (e.g., conservative, liberal, socialist); analyzing the effect of public opinion on government policy; understanding the organization of the mass media; evaluating the newsworthiness of various media sources; and analyzing the influence of the media on U.S. political life (e.g., agenda setting, issue framing).

**0016 Understand state and local government in the United States.**

For example: demonstrating familiarity with the forms and functions of state, tribal, and local governments; demonstrating knowledge of social and economic issues confronting state, tribal, and local governments; analyzing the operation of the system of checks and balances in state government; understanding structural and political influences on state policy (e.g., level of economic development, interest groups); and analyzing the modern relationship between state and local governments.

**0017 Understand the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.**

For example: analyzing the political, legal, and personal rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution; understanding the duties of U.S. citizenship; analyzing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for successful participation in democratic self-government; and analyzing participation at different levels of government.

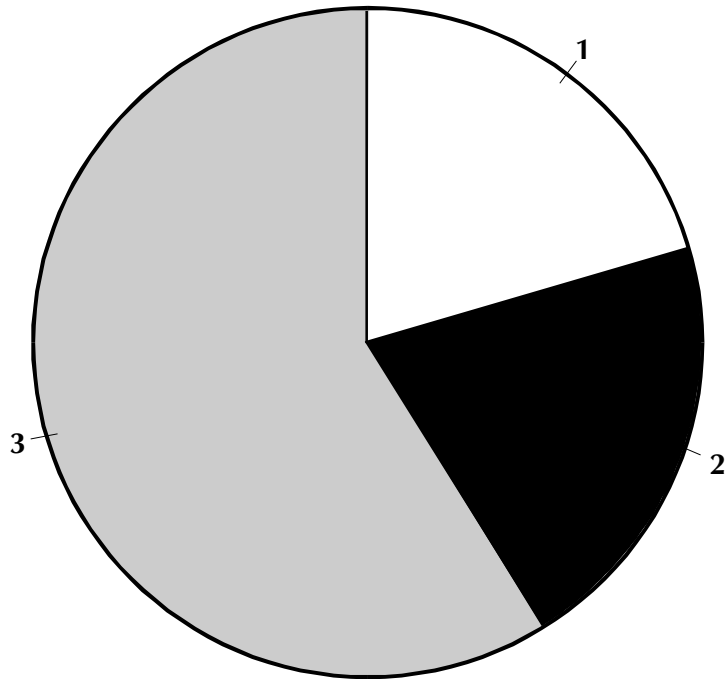
**0018 Understand basic features of democratic government in the United States.**

For example: examining efforts to remove barriers to political, legal, and social equality in the United States; analyzing factors that have expanded or limited the role of individuals and groups in U.S. political life (e.g., federal court decisions, amendments, social movements); understanding how democratic procedures can be used to promote social change (e.g., civil rights movement, expanding suffrage, labor reform, equal rights movement); analyzing the relationship between majority rule and minority rights; demonstrating knowledge of the roles played by diverse groups in the evolution of democracy in the United States; and analyzing the role of dissent in a democratic society.

**0019 Understand state government and government of American Indian nations in Arizona.**

For example: examining the roles of state government and the government of Native American nations in the federal system; recognizing the progressive principles contained in the constitution of the state of Arizona (e.g., referendum, recall, initiative); understanding the structure and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the Arizona state government (e.g., plural executive); recognizing ways in which citizens can participate in the Arizona political process; analyzing relations among state, federal, tribal, and local governmental bodies in Arizona; and comparing the structure of Arizona and federal governments.

### DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED-RESPONSE ITEMS ON THE TEST FORM



Subarea	Approximate Percentage of Selected-Response Items on Test Form
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Concepts and Skills	21%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Political Thought, Comparative Government, and International Relations	21%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. United States and Arizona Government	58%

# PRACTICE QUESTIONS

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## Field 06: Political Science/American Government

1. A political scientist would most likely use the concept of *states' rights* to examine which of the following questions?
  - A. the use of state subsidies to induce businesses to move from one state to another state
  - B. the structure and procedures of the electoral college
  - C. the operation of the system of checks and balances in state government
  - D. the role of federalism in the system of government established by the U.S. Constitution
2. A political scientist wishes to investigate the influence of media on voter behavior. Which of the following best describes the sequence of steps that would most commonly be followed in conducting this type of research project?
  - A. develop a research design—collect data—form a hypothesis
  - B. form a hypothesis—develop a research design—collect data
  - C. collect data—form a hypothesis—develop a research design
  - D. develop a research design—form a hypothesis—collect data
3. A political scientist would most likely use a flow chart for which of the following purposes?
  - A. to illustrate the process by which a legislative proposal becomes law
  - B. to compare government spending in the United States and Europe
  - C. to show changes in regional representation in the U.S. Congress over a period of time
  - D. to depict the functions and aims of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
4. Which of the following best describes a major difference between the U.S. Congress and the British Parliament?
  - A. The president of the United States exercises more power over the legislature than the British prime minister.
  - B. Unlike U.S. legislators, members of Parliament may also hold positions in the executive branch while they are serving in Parliament.
  - C. The House of Lords has more power in shaping legislation than the U.S. Senate.
  - D. Unlike members of Parliament, U.S. legislators have the authority to collect taxes and decide how these and other funds will be spent.

5. Which of the following best matches a major U.S. foreign policy initiative with the aim that it was primarily designed to achieve?
- A. Monroe Doctrine: to keep European powers out of the Western Hemisphere
  - B. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points: to protect the physical security of important allies
  - C. Eisenhower Doctrine: to further the United States' economic interests
  - D. Richard Nixon's detente policy: to prevent the spread of revolutionary ideologies
6. Which of the following describe ways in which the legislative branch of the U.S. federal government can check the power of the judicial branch?
- I. Congress can establish the duration of appointments to the federal judiciary.
  - II. Congress can impeach federal judges for misconduct.
  - III. Congress can propose constitutional amendments to overturn Supreme Court decisions.
  - IV. Congress can determine which cases are heard by the Supreme Court.
- A. I and II only
  - B. I and IV only
  - C. II and III only
  - D. III and IV only

Use the excerpt below from an 1821 Supreme Court decision by John Marshall to answer the two questions that follow.

The American states, as well as the American people, have believed that a close and firm union is essential to their liberty and to their happiness. They have been taught by experience that this union cannot exist without a government for the entire nation. They have been taught by the same experience that this government would be useless, that it would disappoint all their hopes, unless it had the sovereignty that belongs to independent nations.

To this supreme government ample powers are given. The people of the United States have declared that they are given "in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty" to themselves and their posterity. With ample powers given to this supreme government for these purposes are connected many specific limitations on the sovereignty of the states.

The powers of the Union on the subjects of war, peace, and commerce, and on many others, are in themselves limitations of the sovereignty of the states. In addition to these, the sovereignty of the states is given up in many instances where it benefits the people. In such cases, no other power may be conferred on Congress than a power to maintain the principles established in the Constitution.

7. Marshall's assertion that the American people have learned from experience that a national government would be useless without the "sovereignty that belongs to independent nations" was most likely a reference to which of the following?
  - A. the restrictions placed on George Washington by the Continental Congress
  - B. the weaknesses of Congress during the Confederation period
  - C. the difficulties experienced by early presidents in establishing U.S. foreign policy
  - D. the presidential actions that resulted in the War of 1812
8. The views expressed in the passage can best be characterized as a:
  - A. liberal interpretation of the Bill of Rights.
  - B. strict constructionist interpretation of the U.S. Constitution.
  - C. conservative interpretation of the principle of separation of powers.
  - D. nationalist interpretation of federalism.

9. Which of the following was a major factor in the decision of the U.S. government to take a less active role in national economic matters than did most Western European governments during the late nineteenth century?
- A. the domination of the U.S. government by southern and western agricultural interests
  - B. the weak organization of the two major political parties in the United States
  - C. the strength of political traditions such as the separation of powers and federalism in the United States
  - D. the relatively small turnout for most national elections in the United States
10. Which of the following best explains why, during the 1820s, political parties in the United States abandoned congressional caucuses and began holding national conventions to nominate presidential candidates?
- A. Because congressional caucuses were often unable to agree on a candidate, party leaders felt that having national conventions decide such questions would make the selection process more efficient and less acrimonious.
  - B. Because congressional caucuses limited the number of people involved in the selection process, retaining this method of nominating candidates would have exposed parties to charges of undemocratic behavior.
  - C. Because not all states were represented in congressional caucuses, party leaders believed that allowing national conventions to nominate presidential candidates would reduce intersectional disputes within the party.
  - D. Because the congressional caucus represented only one branch of government, retaining this method of nominating candidates would have exposed parties to charges of attempting to destroy the system of checks and balances.

11. Which of the following best describes a major difference between state government and local government in the United States?
- A. State governments devote a larger proportion of their expenditures to educational services than do local governments.
  - B. Local governments are more reliant on sales taxes as a source of revenue than are state governments.
  - C. Unlike local governments, officials in state governments are most often elected rather than appointed.
  - D. State governments are more often based on a system of checks and balances than are local governments.
12. Which of the following best illustrates the way in which supporters of direct democracy have influenced the development of the government in the United States?
- A. During the anti-Federalist campaign, citizens called for a Bill of Rights to be included in the U.S. Constitution.
  - B. During the Jacksonian era, an effort was made to remove property restrictions on voting.
  - C. During the Progressive era, citizens succeeded in instituting the use of referenda and initiatives in policy-making at the state level.
  - D. During the 1960s, an effort was made to ban states from requiring voters to pay toll taxes.

Below are the directions for the Political Science/American Government performance assignment.

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE PERFORMANCE ASSIGNMENT

This section of the test consists of a performance assignment. **The assignment can be found on the next page.** You are asked to prepare a written response of approximately 2–3 pages on the assigned topic. You should use your time to plan, write, review, and edit your response for the assignment.

Read the assignment carefully before you begin to work. Think about how you will organize your response. You may use any blank space in this test booklet to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response. **However, your score will be based solely on the version of your response written in Written Response Booklet B.**

As a whole, your response must demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and skills of the field. In your response to the assignment, you are expected to demonstrate the depth of your understanding of the content area through your ability to apply your knowledge and skills rather than merely to recite factual information.

Your response will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

- **PURPOSE:** the extent to which the response achieves the purpose of the assignment
- **SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE:** accuracy and appropriateness in the application of subject matter knowledge
- **SUPPORT:** quality and relevance of supporting details
- **RATIONALE:** soundness of argument and degree of understanding of the subject matter

The performance assignment is intended to assess subject knowledge content and skills, not writing ability. However, your response must be communicated clearly enough to permit scorers to make a valid evaluation of your response according to the criteria listed above. Your response should be written for an audience of educators in this field. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited American English. This should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

Be sure to write about the assigned topic. Please write legibly. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Remember to review your work and make any changes you think will improve your response.

Below is the scoring scale for the Political Science/American Government performance assignment.

**SUBJECT TESTS—PERFORMANCE ASSIGNMENT SCORING SCALE**

<b>Score Point</b>	<b>Score Point Description</b>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>The "4" response reflects a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is fully achieved.</li> <li>• There is a substantial, accurate, and appropriate application of subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is sound; there are high-quality, relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects an ably reasoned, comprehensive understanding of the topic.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>The "3" response reflects an adequate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is largely achieved.</li> <li>• There is a generally accurate and appropriate application of subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is adequate; there are some acceptable, relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects an adequately reasoned understanding of the topic.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>The "2" response reflects a limited knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is partially achieved.</li> <li>• There is a limited, possibly inaccurate or inappropriate, application of subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence is limited; there are few relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects a limited, poorly reasoned understanding of the topic.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>The "1" response reflects a weak knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the assignment is not achieved.</li> <li>• There is little or no appropriate or accurate application of subject matter knowledge.</li> <li>• The supporting evidence, if present, is weak; there are few or no relevant examples.</li> <li>• The response reflects little or no reasoning about or understanding of the topic.</li> </ul>
<b>U</b>	<p><b>The response is unrelated to the assigned topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, not of sufficient length to score, or merely a repetition of the assignment.</b></p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>There is no response to the assignment.</b></p>

## Practice Performance Assignment

13. **Read the information below; then complete the exercise that follows.**

The United States' political system, it is frequently pointed out, borrowed a great deal from important political philosophers of the time, as well as from other forms of government and political systems already in existence.

Using your knowledge of political thought and comparative government, write an essay in which you:

- identify and discuss two political philosophers who exerted an important influence on the founding principles of the United States' political system; and
- discuss how the influence of these two thinkers is apparent in two important documents or institutions of the United States government.

**Sample Performance Assignment Response: Score Point 4**

Although in its forms and institutions the United States government is in many ways unique, it was not created in a vacuum. Some of the elements that went into its construction had been in existence for centuries. The Greek principles of enlightened citizen participation and the Roman republican ideals had been carried forward in some European governments, most notably the British, and were perpetuated in the American concept of democracy. In addition, it was only natural for the Americans to carry on some of the most cherished elements of the British system under which many of them had previously been governed.

Among the contemporary political philosophers whose ideas exerted a major effect on the formation of the American political state were John Locke and Montesquieu. Locke's most important work began to appear in the immediate aftermath of England's Glorious Revolution (1688) and was essentially a rationale or justification for that political trauma. Locke made the important argument that human beings are by nature all essentially free, equal, and independent, and that they submit to the will of a monarch not because of any divine right but because they find it "convenient" to do so. Essentially, the governed enter into a social contract with the monarch that may be broken by revolutionary action at any time the monarch does not live up to public expectations. Locke's ideal of the free, equal, independent individual bound by mutual contract to the ruler stands in marked contrast to other influential political thinkers (like Machiavelli and Hobbes), whose sense of the weakness of human nature was used as a justification of "enlightened despotism," the most widespread form of government in Europe during the eighteenth century.

Another important political thinker who definitely influenced the genesis of the United States political system was Montesquieu. In his analysis of the British political system, which he had come to think of as a utopia, Montesquieu found much to praise in the fundamental notion of division of powers. No government can be just, Montesquieu argues, when the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or when the judiciary is united with either of the other two. Although Montesquieu's analysis was very influential at the time, some commentators have subsequently come to feel that he was not sufficiently aware that the British system was not moving toward a true separation of powers, but toward a concentration of powers in the House of Commons, with the cabinet being utilized as an instrument for asserting legislative authority over the executive branch.

The original documents and institutions of the American republic make clear the influence of these two thinkers. The opening sentences of the Constitution—asserting that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights and that governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed—clearly derive from Locke. Similarly, the first ten amendments to the Constitution, guaranteeing freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and other personal liberties, were taken largely from the English Bill of Rights, another consequence

*(continued on next page)*

**Sample Performance Assignment Response: Score Point 4 (continued)**

of the Glorious Revolution for which Locke was a major advocate. And Montesquieu's analysis of the concept of the division of powers was, finally, fully realized in the United States. The American system was established based on a true division of equally-held powers, with the executive branch checking the Congress through the veto power and the judiciary through the appointment of judges, Congress checking the executive and judiciary through impeachment and the right of confirming appointments, and the judiciary checking the legislative and executive branches through the power to declare laws and executive acts unconstitutional.

# ANSWER KEY

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## Field 06: Political Science/American Government

Question Number	Correct Response	Objective
1.	<b>D</b>	Understand political science terms, concepts, and theories.
2.	<b>B</b>	Understand methods for locating, gathering, and organizing social science information.
3.	<b>A</b>	Understand how to frame questions, analyze and synthesize information, make generalizations, and reach and communicate valid conclusions.
4.	<b>B</b>	Understand various governmental systems.
5.	<b>A</b>	Understand U.S. foreign policy.
6.	<b>C</b>	Understand the structure, organization, and operation of the federal government.
7.	<b>B</b>	Understand the historical development of government in the United States.
8.	<b>D</b>	Understand the United States Constitution.
9.	<b>C</b>	Understand the relationship of government to the United States economic system.
10.	<b>B</b>	Understand the election process in the United States.
11.	<b>D</b>	Understand state and local government in the United States.
12.	<b>C</b>	Understand basic features of democratic government in the United States.